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The United Kingdom: A Political History. By GOLDWIN SMITH, D.C.L. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1899. Two vols., pp. xi, 650; vi, 482.)

At the age of seventy-six, Mr. Goldwin Smith has given to the world his most ambitious and most important work. *The United Kingdom* may be looked upon as containing the sum of Mr. Smith's historical philosophy and as representing his matured views upon historical presentation. Though "performed by the hand of extreme old age," as Mr. Smith says in his preface, the work is marked by a virility and spirit rarely equalled among younger writers. This strength is the more remarkable in that the work is not history as the modern student understands it—that is, it is neither an impartial narrative of events nor a logical study of causes and their effects—but is rather an exposition of the views which Mr. Smith holds upon the men and movements of English history. This fact gives to the work a definite individuality, and is its chief claim upon the attention of the reader, for Mr. Smith has, as all know, strong opinions.

After dismissing the Anglo-Saxon period in fifteen pages the author carries his discussion continuously forward to the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria. In a few instances he pursues his chronology beyond 1837 and anticipates later events, especially in the chapter devoted to the colonies, in which he continues Canadian history to 1871 and Indian history through the mutiny. He is both broad and narrow in scope; broad in that he concerns himself not with southern England, but with England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; and narrow in that he does not follow the expansion of England into a Greater Britain. Apparently he is not influenced by the writings of Seeley and Mahan, for neither the policy of Pitt nor the Seven Years' War entices him to speak of expansion, and even when discussing the commercial war with Napoleon he does not so much as remark upon the importance of sea-power in history. He has, it is true, a separate chapter upon the colonies in the East and West, but of the influence of the colonial and commercial policy that they entailed he says nothing; and so far is he from understanding the colonial aspects of the mercantile system, that he thinks England should have let her American colonies go free from the beginning (II. 208).

Mr. Smith's method of treatment is to take each reign in its order and to deal with its various aspects in a half chronological, half topical manner. Sometimes he has followed a given subject until he has worked it entirely out; then again he has not hesitated to break his sequence and turn aside to examine some other topic that intrudes itself chronologically. Within his chosen field of politics, his range is wide, and the number of matters dealt with, large. Ecclesiastical, financial, and economic questions are also occasionally brought up for presentation, and on the social side nothing could be happier than his description of the stereotyped chivalry of the fourteenth century (I. 211). Discussing these many questions Mr. Smith does not adopt a narrative but combines description with commentary. Matters of proportion, perspective, and the relative

importance of events do not trouble him, for in his eyes the value of history is to furnish lessons for the conduct of the present and opportunities for moral instruction. While paragraphs and groups of paragraphs are consistently devoted to a given subject, yet there are scarcely any other motives for his arrangements than such as are literary and artistic, and in consequence the interest is sustained less by the subject itself than by the manner in which Mr. Smith has treated it. In the hands of a weaker man many of the chapters, such as those on the reigns of Edward III. and James I., would seem confused and chaotic. In the latter instance (Vol. I., ch. xx.), where the introductory portion has been elaborated with great care at very considerable length, the general effect may be deemed a failure. Generally, however, the firm grasp, trenchant conclusions, and picturesque style tend to hold the attention of the reader, who is interested to know what Mr. Smith is going to say next. The arrangement, though arbitrary and often artificial, does not destroy this interest, for the different chapters, in reality partake of the character of essays.

In style Mr. Smith is inclined to be dramatic and rhetorical, and sometimes one's mind is kept under too persistent a strain for the effect to be agreeable. This is partly due to the author's fondness for well rounded periods and groups of dependent clauses with a suitable climax, partly to the personal and biographical character of the subjects he has selected to treat. In his characterization of historical personages Mr. Smith assigns to each individual his full quota of moral responsibility and stands at the opposite extreme from those who would explain moral effects by physical causes and reduce historical study to mere pathology. His descriptions of Becket, William Wallace, Richard II., Jack Cade, the members of the Cabal, and many others are models of literary form and expression, of graceful analysis and brilliant coloring. Models to the novelist; hardly, we think, always to the impartial historian. In the cases of Cromwell and Edmund Burke, where the character is worked out in connection with the events, in which each was a leading actor, the method is more historical and the results more true. With the treatment of the minor personages and those who, though great in other fields, were only incidentally connected with political history, Mr. Smith is equally forcible in what he says, as when he characterizes Swift as "strangely combining some of the highest gifts of human genius with the malice as well as the filthiness of the ancestral ape." Scenes full of strife and surcharged with excitement offer Mr. Smith admirable material for picture-painting, and the investiture struggle between Henry I. and Anselm, the barbaric warfare in Ireland, and the events leading to the adoption of the Grand Remonstrance are exceedingly well done.

In certain particulars Mr. Smith's partisanship assumes striking proportions. For example, the relations between England and Scotland on one side and England and Ireland on the other call forth from the author vigorous denunciation. Charging upon William the Conqueror and the Norman Conquest the severance of Scotland and Wales from England (II. 140), he loses no opportunity to censure every royal act

that does not aim at union. He cuts the Gordian knot of legal controversy by declaring that it was the right and duty of Edward I. to conquer Scotland (I. 196), which if not ripe then for union, was to be no riper "after centuries of war, mutual devastation and ever deepening hate" (I. 411). He ardently defends Cromwell's policy (I. 591) and condemns unsparingly "the ignoble policy" of the Restoration (II. 21), which reduced the land to a satrapy (23). He hails the union of 1707 as a greater victory than Blenheim, yet he does not give the slightest hint that commercial interests helped to reconcile the Scots to the loss of their independence. Such treatment as this inevitably raises the question whether English history can be justly written when other interests than the political are so completely ignored. For Ireland the attempted conquest of Henry I. was the opening of "seven centuries of woe" (I. 99). From this time forward fire and fury, blood and slaughter mingled with the author's hot words of wrath at England fill the Irish scene, relieved only by the Cromwellian calm. But Cromwell dies and leaves no heirs of his policy and the war is resumed. English corruption, a "bloated" alien church, grasping landlords are on one side, while on the other are Irish murder and arson, and Mr. Smith's burning vocabulary. In no other part of his work is Mr. Smith's vigorous partisanship more conspicuously portrayed; for with Ireland at least the question is no longer medieval but modern.

Mr. Smith uses his text as furnishing suitable occasions for brief homilies on current questions. Epigrammatic comments of this character are scattered everywhere through these volumes. Whenever he runs up against a matter touching protection or church establishment he is always ready to express his sentiment in no half-hearted way. We meet with such sentences as these: "The statute-book is full of commercial legislation mostly protectionist and meddling and therefore unsound" (I. 224); "by him as far as was possible in a perverse generation and under a reign of landlords were advanced in all directions sound economical principles, above all the principles of free trade" (II. 328.) Again concerning the Established Church he says, "The church still remains in bondage to the state" (I. 375); "On every side we are met by the consequences of the union of the church with the state, and the entanglement of the real duty of government with its supposed duty of maintaining and enforcing the true religion" (I. 423); an "ever pernicious entanglement" (I. 448), "an entanglement leading to evils and confusion" (I. 523), he elsewhere calls it. He decries the election of judges (II. 83), bewails the effect of publicity on modern orators and parliamentary debate (I. 526; II. 229), and in one passage seemingly has in mind the South African crisis when he says: "It has been truly said that the Englishmen are not at ease in their aggrandizement unless they can believe themselves to have a moral object, and that Cromwell was in this respect a typical Englishman. But the combination was more genuine, the illusion at least was easier in the case of one who served the

God of the Old Testament than it is in that of the imperialist of the present day" (I. 634).

In his arrangement of subjects, in his comments upon current questions, in his historical parallels, of which there are many, in his use of the past to illustrate the present, and in his persistent viewing of the past from the standpoint of the present, Mr. Smith represents a form of historical presentation that is rapidly passing away. He seems to scoff in passing at him whom he calls the evolutionary historian and takes frequent occasions to throw the "accidents" of history into the face of a "science of history" (I. 273, 644, II. 301). Of such "accidents" he finds many (I. 194, 343, 521, II. 74), and all concern the life and actions of the individual, a truly incalculable element in history. He does not seem unwilling, however, to confess that the importance of individuals is growing less as intelligence spreads (I. 643), but he has not acted upon his own suggestion, magnifying the biographical side of history and making the moral treatment of character his first thought. In all these particulars in which he stands opposed to the modern historical school his point of view will be understood by those who know him, and by those who do not will be interesting because of the moral earnestness which characterizes it. No reader of this work can fail to realize that he is in the hands of an uncompromising advocate.

But there is another aspect of Mr. Smith's treatment that is distinctly harmful. I do not refer to his partisanship, which tends to discount itself, but to his misrepresentation of what history is by his want of sympathy for or appreciation of the institutions of the past, and the stress which he everywhere lays upon the darker side of human character and human life. His shadows are too deep, his epithets too harsh. He can see no benefits in the Norman Conquest (I. 23, 40, 43, 61, 74, 104), though his own characterization of the reign of Henry II. belies his words (I. 69, 114); he sneers at the Church (I. 35, 37, 54, 155, 167); is hostile to Henry VIII., unfavorable to Elizabeth and all the Stuarts, and only lightens his darkness by his one really fine piece of historical writing on the Long Parliament, Cromwell, and the Commonwealth, though even here he shows animosity to the Presbyterians, whom he charges with intolerance and blasphemy. From the Restoration again all is dark: kings are debauchees or fools, men in office stupid or corrupt. Abroad the lines are even more deeply drawn. Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, Frederic William I., Frederic the Great, Napoleon, Metternich, and others are hated with a burning hatred. "Priestridden," "charlatan," "fanatical champion," "military maniac," "cruel and perfidious idiot," are not the harshest of the characterizing epithets. Mr. Smith cannot separate the private from the public life of an individual. He cannot separate the past from the present. He does not understand and consequently misrepresents feudalism, the medieval church, medieval monarchy, mercantilism, and the colonial system. He judges each as if it were an institution of to-day.

The inevitable conclusion is that Mr. Smith's history is but a tale of a corrupt monarchy and a superstitious church, of political jobbery, rapacity, and governmental maladministration generally ; a tale, that is, of human error. Men, and women, too, have left undone those things that they ought to have done and have done those things that they ought not to have done, and Mr. Smith does not hesitate to disclose their faults. We are reminded at times of that "rigid liberalism," of which Lord Acton speaks, "which by repressing the time-test and applying the main rules of morality all round, converts history into a frightful monument of sin." It would seem at times as if the author preferred to make his delineations dark that the moral lesson might be the more strongly emphasized. But the resulting impression is wrong. History is not the tale of the vices of men, as Lingard, the French philosophers, Joseph de Maistre, and now Mr. Smith wish to make it. We admire the author's style and his wonderful command of English speech, we respect his point of view and his own chosen method of presenting the subject, but when we have reached the end of his work and look back over the path we have traversed we cannot believe that the conclusions reached and the impressions left are those that the reading public ought to have of the history of the United Kingdom.

CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

The Commune of London and Other Studies. By J. H. ROUND, M.A. (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co. 1899. Pp. xviii, 336.)

THIS volume contains fifteen essays dealing with the Anglo-Saxon vills, the history of London, Anglo-Norman warfare, the origin of the Exchequer, the conquest of Ireland, the inquest of sheriffs (1170), the coronation of Richard I., the battle of Bannockburn, cornage, the marshalship of England, and other subjects. In fact, so many topics are examined that it is impossible to explain their purport within the limited space allotted to this review. Many of the questions examined are important, and the results attained form a welcome addition to our stock of knowledge, though they are of less general interest than those embodied in Round's *Feudal England*. Both works display the same striking merits: remarkable acuteness in unearthing new materials, masterly analysis and interpretation of charters, clearness of diction, and the accurate presentation of facts. In both works, on the other hand, the narrative sometimes lacks coherence ; the author is inclined to magnify the importance of his "discoveries ;" and he exhibits undue asperity in his treatment of historians whose statements he cannot accept. *The Commune of London* fairly bristles with polemical paragraphs. Mr. Round's heavy batteries are directed against Hubert Hall ; but Kemble, Freeman, Brewer, Archer, Stevenson, Loftie, Oman, Miss Norgate, and other historians are also subjected to a more or less furious cannonade. With less smoke and carnage Mr. Round's merits as an historian of high rank would stand forth more clearly.